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THE CHURCHES

and the

EUROPEAN RECOVERY PROGRAM

The Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

A statement submitted by the Department of International Justice and Goodwill and adopted by the Executive Committee of the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America, January 13, 1948

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The Churches *and the* European Recovery Program

As Christians, we support the European Recovery Program in the conviction that it can be one of history's most momentous affirmations of faith in the curative power of freedom and in the creative capacity of free men.

The ways and means of that program will, of necessity, be largely economic and political. The motives and objectives behind it should be essentially moral and spiritual. They should be above political partisanship. They should transcend considerations of narrow self-interest.

The European Recovery Program must be a material investment, though not primarily for material reasons. It must also be an investment in the world's moral and spiritual resources and in the means for their speedy release. If it is to contribute thus to the healing of the nations and to the fruitful employment of the creative will and spirit of the peoples, the material investment must be an expression of these Christian convictions:

First, that Man, who is endowed by his Creator with inalienable rights, is also endowed by Him with inherent aspirations for a life of freedom and fellowship.

Second, that these God-given aspirations can now, with our help, be given conditions more favorable for fulfillment.

Third, that to provide all men with a better opportunity to fulfill them is the only basis for the hope that the world can make a peace which will be durable because it is just.

The nations of Europe have been struggling courageously with their problems. Some of these nations, however, are fearful of the possibility that the United States may seek to make Europe over in its political and economic image, just as they are fearful in the knowledge that Soviet Russia is seeking to make Europe over in its image.

The European Recovery Program must be the means by which Europe and the world are released from such fears and freed from the shackles they impose. This it can be if, in its framing and administration, it clearly expresses our conviction that Europe possesses abundant assets of mind and spirit. To these we can add our moral and material aid, for the remaking of Europe and the consequent enrichment of our civilization.

This program, therefore, cannot be a prescription of what we expect the nations of Europe to do. It must be an expression of confidence in the peoples of Europe, who have been making earnest efforts at self-help; a vote of confidence in what, with our aid, they will choose to do for themselves.

But our aid is indispensable. In the wake of the devastations of the war, these nations have been visited by unanticipated dislocations and disruptions through two postwar years. We are called upon to help them to overthrow these accumulated obstacles to recovery. But that help will fail of its most important purpose if, in extending it, we attempt to fashion or shape their future. It will succeed if we affirm and undergird the rights, the desires, and the capacities of these peoples to work out, for our common good, their own destiny.

An undertaking so conceived and directed merits our material sacrifices because it is a cause which enlists our Christian conscience and conforms to our Christian commitments.

If it is to fulfill its potential promise, the European Recovery Program must be guided by a positive and dynamic conception of the reconstruction task. To this end we urge that consideration be given to the following principles.

1. Basic reconstruction is an enterprise for the releasing of the creative energies of men. It is for this that we are providing them with tools. The material obstacles to recovery in Europe lie partly in the shortage of capital equipment, partly in the instability and unexchangeability of currencies, and partly in artificial financial and trade restrictions. But deeper obstacles lie in the fear of another war and despair for the future. It is of the utmost importance that the curative and creative possibilities of the European Recovery Program shall be so emphasized and so kept to the forefront as to appeal to the consciences, arouse the wills, and enlist the best efforts of men of good will on both sides of the Atlantic. There is, we believe, no other way by which the full potentialities of this program can be realized.

2. American aid for such a recovery program cannot be devoid of risk. Vast uncertainties are involved. We should be aware, however, that the risks of failure are much smaller and much less certain than the risks of inaction. American aid must therefore be an act of faith, a faith which has a sure foundation in our Christian conception of what man is and may become.

3. Financially, the prudent and conservative course is for us to plan now and boldly. Less than an adequate initial program will delay the day when Europe can take over for itself the task of restoration. Less than that may reduce the entire program to the level of costly relief.

4. The United States must be zealously on guard against imposing, or appearing to impose, conditions in the granting of foreign aid which would seem to threaten the political independence of the nations of Europe, or their right to

choose their own way of life. We must not hamper efforts to establish European cooperation. As the European Recovery Program is carried forward, our nation must seriously honor the basic purpose of the program, not to infringe but to protect and strengthen and enlarge European freedoms and the development toward a community of free societies.

5. We have a right to expect that the nations participating in this program carry out their own expressed intention to work cooperatively, to maintain monetary stability, and to reduce trade barriers, in order to make the program effective. Such a procedure is the best insurance that out of this struggle for recovery there will emerge a more healthful European economy and a more united European community. The United States must make sure that its own policy toward Germany not only fits into this cooperative pattern but provides a demonstration of it.

6. The European Recovery Program should give encouragement to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and other United Nations agencies to undertake, as the area of cooperation is extended, an increasingly important role in the recovery effort. We are bound both by our commitments to the United Nations and by the purpose of the European Recovery Program to see to it that United Nations machinery serve to develop broader trade relations within Europe and eventually as a means for the fuller coordination of the economic relations among the nations.

7. From the start it is essential that the European Recovery Program encourage the development of trade between the participating states and the countries of Eastern Europe. The resources of these countries are required for the recovery and development of Western Europe just as they, in turn, need the manufactures of Western states. It is encouraging that the present opposition of the Soviet government to the European Recovery Program still does not prevent mutually

beneficial trade arrangements with Eastern Europe. It is also important for the United States to persuade and assist nations outside of Europe to provide goods for European recovery, thus broadening the area of cooperation and speeding reconstruction. The Recovery Program, together with the contributions of other nations, should meet the net import needs of the cooperating European countries that are essential to their recovery.

8. If the United States is to fulfill its long-term responsibility in the world economy it must help enable other countries to manufacture and sell their own goods and services in order to buy what they need. Therefore, the European Recovery Program should be linked with long-range planning to increase American imports so that European economic life as well as our own may be maintained at a high level.

9. The American people will be called upon to accept certain specific limitations on their own economic desires during this critical period in order that the larger good of world recovery may be served. In view of the great human objectives, Christians should accept such limitations willingly. In emergencies such as this our customary waste of food and other scarce commodities is scandalous and un-Christian. If, in addition to voluntary controls, certain government controls should be required to assure a fair allocation of needed goods for foreign aid and domestic consumption, we believe that such controls should be adopted. From the point of view of morality and even of self-interest the stakes are too high to permit either selfishness or short-sightedness to prevail.

These principles, we believe, can make the European Recovery Program a cooperative effort to deal with the basic causes of tyranny and war. Such an effort is in keeping with the constructive peace strategy for which our churches stand.